

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FAA-00
MCT-01 SY-05 /102 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6602
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
USMISSION GENEVA
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMSEVENTHFLT
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA
MAC SCOTT AF BASE ILLINOIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 05237

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

MAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, PINS, PINT, JA
SUBJECT: POLITICAL IMPACT OF NARITA

REF: TOKYO 04941

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SUMMARY: VIOLENCE OF RADICAL ATTACK ON NARITA AIRPORT
MARCH 26 HAS ENCOURAGED DIE-HARD AIRPORT OPPONENTS TO
CONTINUE CAMPAIGN, BUT HAS LOST THEM PUBLIC SYMPATHY OFTEN
ACCORDED SMALL MINORITIES OPPOSING BIG-GOVERNMENT AND BIG
BUSINESS IN POST-WAR JAPAN. GOJ IS NOW FACED WITH DILEMMA
OF HOW TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH PROTESTORS WITHOUT ADOPT-
ING KIND OF DRACONIAN MEASURES THAT MIGHT MAKE MARTYRS OUT

OF RADICALS. SO FAR, PRIMIN FUKUDA'S MODERATE APPROACH -- TIGHTER ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LAWS RATHER THAN EMERGENCY POWERS OR USE OF FIREARMS -- HAS WON GRUDGING ACCEPTANCE OF NORMALLY CRITICAL PRESS, AND FUKUDA OPPONENTS WITHIN AND WITHOUT HIS PARTY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO TAG PRIMIN WITH PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR INCIDENT. CABINET OFFICER HEADING NATIONAL POLICE AND NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION MAY ULTIMATELY BE FORCED TO RESIGN, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO WIDESPREAD LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN GOJ. HOWEVER, WHILE POLICE MAY BE ABLE TO CONTAIN MASS PROTESTS AGAINST AIRPORT IN FUTURE, GUARANTEEING SECURITY AGAINST ACTIVITIES OF TERRORIST CELLS MAY BE DIFFICULT, AND SHOULD TRAGEDIES CONTINUE AT NARITA, GOJ WILL BE UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE EITHER TO SUSPEND OPERATION, OR TO ADOPT STIFFER POLICIES TO BATTLE TERRORISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO CONDONING OF LAST WEEKEND'S VIOLENCE AT NARITA, COMMENTATORS HAVE NOT BEEN HESITANT TO ATTRIBUTE ORIGIN OF MARCH 26 VIOLENCE (REFTEL) TO POOR GOJ PLANNING. THEY NOTE THAT GOJ IN EARLY 1960S FAILED TO OBTAIN PRIOR APPROVAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW AIRPORT FROM FARMERS WHO LIVED ON OR NEAR AIRPORT SITE, AND IN UNTRADITIONAL DEVIATION FROM JAPANESE CONSENSUS BUILDING, INVOKED RIGHT OF EMINENT DOMAIN TO FORCE RELUCTANT LANDOWNERS TO SELL PROPERTY. IN ADDITION, MANY TOWNS IN CHIBA PREFECTURE (WHERE NARITA IS LOCATED) OPPOSED
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AIRPORT BECAUSE OF PROSPECTIVE NOISE, INCREASED TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AND POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF TRANSPORTING EXPLOSIVE JET FUEL TO LAND-LOCKED NARITA. THESE ESSENTIALLY LOCAL ISSUES GRADUALLY ATTRACTED SUPPORT OF WIDE VARIETY OF ISSUE-STARVED RADICAL STUDENT GROUPS ANXIOUS TO ALIGN THEMSELVES WITH "WORKERS AND PEASANTS," AS WELL AS ENVIRONMENT-MINDED CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH SAW NARITA AS PART OF LARGER NATIONAL STRUGGLE AGAINST RAMPANT INDUSTRIALIZATION. ANTI-NARITA COALITION DREW CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY THROUGHOUT NATION.

2. WHILE IT HAS BEEN POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOJ TO OPEN AIRPORT SINCE ITS COMPLETION IN 1972, GOJ HAS CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS WITH LOCAL FARMERS AND COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT MID-1970'S AND MOST OF LOCAL OPPOSITION HAS NOW BEEN OVERCOME. ACCORDING TO PRESS, MEMBERSHIP IN LOCAL FARMERS OPPOSITION GROUPS HAS FALLEN FROM HIGH OF 3,000 IN 1966 TO 250 DIE-HARDS TODAY. WITHOUT SUPPORT OF RADICAL STUDENT GROUPS, ESTIMATED AT 5,000-6,000 MEMBERS, FARMERS PROBABLY COULD NOT CONTINUE THEIR MASS CAMPAIGN. (RADICALS TRACE LINEAGE THROUGH IDEOLOGICAL MAZE TO STUDENT GROUPS IN FOREFRONT OF OPPOSITION TO U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY

TREATY IN EARLY 1960S.) HOWEVER, WHILE STUDENT GROUPS PROVIDE FARMERS WITH NECESSARY MANPOWER AND FUNDS FOR ERECTING BARRICADES AND LAUNCHING ATTACKS ON POLICE, THEIR VIOLENT TACTICS HAVE ALSO LOST FARMERS MOST OF WIDER NATIONAL SYMPATHY THEY ONCE ENJOYED, INCLUDING BACKING OF LEFT-WING POLITICAL PARTIES AND LESS MILITANT CIVIC GROUPS. VIOLENCE OF MARCH 26 ATTACK, WHILE SUCCESSFUL IN RUINING CONTROL TOWER AND PREVENTING SCHEDULED NARITA OPENING, HAS FURTHER ALIENATED PUBLIC OPINION, WHICH NOW VIEWS INSURING SECURITY OF NEW AIRPORT AS MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE.

3. MUCH ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON OVERCONFIDENCE OF CHIBA PREFECTURAL POLICE LEADERS, WHO MOBILIZED FORCE OF 14,000 AT NARITA BUT WHOSE LACK OF ADEQUATE
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COORDINATION AND INTELLIGENCE, WAS MAJOR REASON FOR

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RADICALS' SUCCESS. IN REACTION POLICE, AND MANY CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS IN LDP, CLAIM THAT CURRENT LAWS DO NOT GIVE POLICE SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY TO DISPERSE RADICAL GROUPS BEFORE THEY STRIKE, THAT PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF POLICE ORDERS NOT TO USE FIREARMS AGAINST DEMONSTRATORS (JAPANESE RIOT POLICE ARE ARMED ONLY WITH CLUBS) EMBOLDENS RADICALS. EXTENSIVE USE OF MOLOTOV COCKTAILS IN MARCH 26 ATTACK, AND SUBSEQUENT DISCOVERY OF LETHAL WEAPONS IN ONE OF RADICAL CAMPS RAIDED BY POLICE, SEEMS TO HAVE STRENGTHENED ARGUMENT OF LAW-AND-ORDER ADVOCATES.
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4. PROBLEM FOR PRIME FUKUDA AND GOJ HAS BEEN HOW TO CHECK EXTREMIST GROUPS WITHOUT CREATING IMAGE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPRESSION OR POLICE BRUTALITY, WHICH WOULD SHIFT PUBLIC SYMPATHY FROM GOJ BACK TO ANTI-NARITA FORCES. FUKUDA HAS SOUGHT TO DISTINGUISH ANTI-NARITA FARMERS FROM RADICAL STUDENTS, ASSERTING THAT LATTER POSE "GRAVE CHALLENGE" TO LAW AND ORDER AND DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. YET WHILE ADMITTING GOJ HAS BEEN TOO LENIENT WITH RADICALS THROUGHOUT POST-WAR PERIOD, AND WHILE PROMISING TO ENFORCE MORE STRICTLY EXISTING LAWS AGAINST VIOLENCE, FUKUDA HAS SO FAR INSISTED THAT GOJ WILL ONLY STUDY, NOT REQUEST, NEW LEGISLATION TO DEAL WITH RADICALS.

5. DESPITE STIFF QUESTIONING FROM OPPOSITION DIETMEN, AND SOTTO VOCE ACCUSATIONS OF "WEAK LEADERSHIP" FROM ANTI-FUKUDA FACTIONS IN LDP, PRIME'S EVEN-HANDED RESPONSE TO NARITA PROBLEM HAS SO FAR DEFLECTED POTENTIALLY PERSONAL CRITICISM. GOJ AS WHOLE, AND NATIONAL POLICE AGENCY IN PARTICULAR, HOWEVER, ARE CLEARLY EMBARRASSED BOTH BY INABILITY TO HAVE THIS MAJOR PROJECT COME "ON LINE" DESPITE ALL ATTENDANT OBSTACLES, AS WELL AS BY RELATED INTERNATIONAL LOSS OF FACE. (POLICE OFFICIALS WERE BUSY EARLY THIS WEEK INQUIRING ABOUT LOCAL EMBASSY REACTIONS TO INCIDENT, AND FOREIGN REACTION HAS RECEIVED HEAVY MEDIA PLAY.) NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF, AND PERHAPS EVEN AUTONOMY MINISTER (WHO DIRECTS NATIONAL POLICE AND PUBLIC SECURITY AGENCIES) MAY EVENTUALLY BE FORCED TO RESIGN TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR INCIDENT. INEVITABLE DECISION TO POSTPONE OPENING UNTIL SECURITY CAN BE GUARANTEED APPEARS TO HAVE PUBLIC SUPPORT, BUT PRESS WILL BE WATCHING GOJ CAREFULLY FOR ANY HINT OF OVERREACTION IN CONTROLLING RADICALS

AND WILL BE EQUALLY CRITICAL IF AIRPORT SECURITY CONTINUES
TO BE PROBLEM.
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6. FOR MOMENT, INCIDENT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE CAUSING
MASSIVE LOSS OF CONFIDENCE EITHER IN FUKUDA OR IN GOJ,
NOR DO WE VIEW NARITA PROBLEM, DESPITE SCENES OF SPECTA-
CULAR VIOLENCE SUCH AS LAST WEEKEND'S, AS INDICATION OF
BROADER BREAKDOWN OF SOCIAL ORDER IN JAPAN. NONETHELESS,
THERE ARE SOME PARALLELS TO SEEMINGLY MINDLESS TERRORIST
ACTIVITY IN EUROPE. IN JAPAN, DISPARATE RADICAL GROUPS,
DEPRIVED OF ISSUES THAT SERVED AS RALLYING POINTS IN 1960S
AND EARLY 1970S, E.G. SECURITY TREATY AND VIETNAM, HAVE
FOUND IN NARITA UNIFYING CAUSE FOR THEIR ENERGY, WHICH HAS
OF LATE BEEN DISSIPATED TO INTERNECINE BATTLES. "VICTORY"
ACHIEVED BY FORCING POSTPONEMENT OF OPENING HAS ENCOURAGED
THESE GROUPS TO CONTINUE CAMPAIGN, WHICH LEADER OF DIE-HARD
FARMERS OPPOSITION CLAIMED MARCH 30, COULD GO ON ANOTHER
17 YEARS, "AS LONG AS 30 YEAR WAR IN VIETNAM." ASSUMING
GOJ AND POLICE DO NOT ADOPT DRACONIAN MEASURES WHICH
ALIENATE PUBLIC, THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE MORE DECI-
SIVELY AGAINST LARGER RADICAL GROUPS AND NEUTRALIZE MASS
DEMONSTRATIONS, IN FUTURE. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH IT IS MUCH
MORE DIFFICULT TO OPERATE UNDERGROUND IN JAPAN THAN IN
EUROPE, SMALL TERRORIST CELLS, SUCH AS THOSE WHICH HAVE
PLANTED BOMBS IN SEVERAL MAJOR CITIES IN RECENT YEARS, CAN
ESCAPE DETECTION FOR PROLONGED PERIODS. EVEN AFTER
DAMAGE REPAIRED AND ASSUMING MASS ANTI-AIRPORT MOVEMENT
BE BROKEN UP BY POLICE, IT IS POSSIBLE SUCH SMALL CELLS
WOULD CARRY
ON FIGHT. IN LONG RUN, IT IS THESE SMALL GROUPS WHICH
COULD POSE CONTINUING THREAT TO SECURITY AT NARITA, AND PUT
PRESSURE ON GOJ TO EITHER SUSPEND AIRPORT PLANS INDEFI-
NITELY, OR TO ADOPT LESS LIBERAL POLICIES FOR DEALING WITH
TERRORISTS. MANSFIELD

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